

HEART
BREAK
HOTEL

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HEART BREAK HOTEL

- ★ JONATHAN ROSS
- ★ PAUL GAMBACCINI
- ★ ALAN MOORE
- ★ DAVE GIBBONS
- ★ GENE PITNEY

32 PAGES OF COMICS

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THE LIFESTYLE COMIC MAGAZINE

Inspiration: Don Melia
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DAVE GIBBONS — THE STORY SO FAR





Leader of the Pack

McLINDA GEBIK ©1987



THE NIGHT OF MY SENIOR BALL HE PICKED ME UP IN HIS LEATHERS. HE LOOKED BEAUTIFUL!



HE HELD ME CLOSE EVERY DANCE. HE WAS TWICE THE MAN OF ANY BOY IN THAT GYM!



I SING LIKE A GIRL
AND I SING LIKE A FROG JJ

I'M A LONELY BOY
AIN'T GOTTA HOME'S

MOM BURST INTO TEARS AS I LEFT. I DIDN'T EVEN CARE IF MY FORMAL GOT BLACK WITH GREASE. I WAS IN LOVE!!!



I MUST HAVE
THE MOST
UNCOOL MOM
IN THE
WORLD!

BLUB CLASS VALEDICTORIAN.
RAINBOW GIRL'S LIST OF
HONORS. I COULD JUST SPIT!



WE PARKED ON A HILL ON THE WAY HOME
AND I GOT MY FIRST FRENCH KISS.



DADDY WAS WAITING UP WHEN I RETURNED. I WALKED STRAIGHT PAST HIM NOT CARING IF HE SAW THE MUD AND GRASS ON MY GOWN.



I SUPPOSE
HE CAN'T TELL
TIME ANY
BETTER THAN
HE READS,
EH?

THAT NIGHT HE TOOK ME FROM BEING A YOUNG GIRL TO A WOMAN. IT WAS THE HEAVEN I'D ALWAYS DREAMED OF.

NEXT DAY I WAS TOLD TO FIND SOMEONE ELSE!
WHAT COULD I POSSIBLY DO?



I FOUND JIMMY AT THE HANGOUT. I STOOD WITH MY CHEEKS BURNING, TRYING TO BLURT OUT THE HARDEST WORDS I'D EVER HAVE TO SAY!



THE LAST THING I EVER WANTED WAS TO HURT HIM!

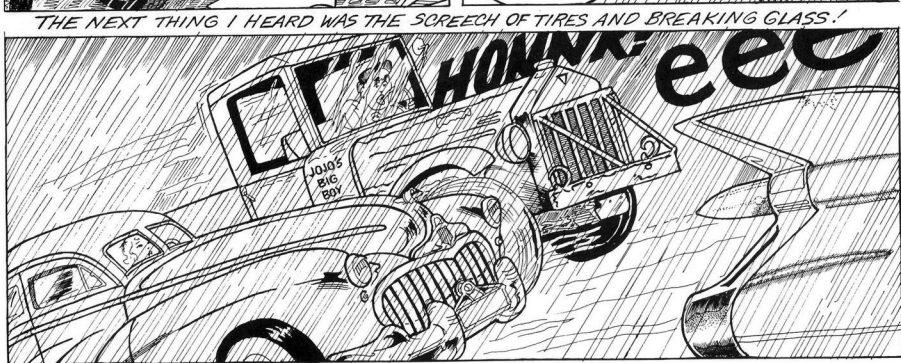
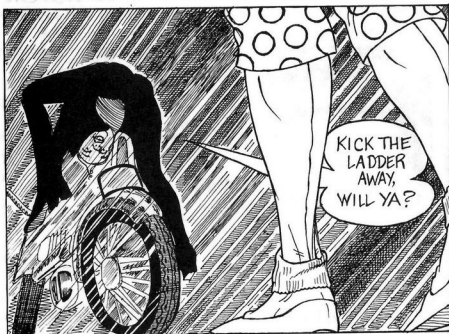


HE LOOKED SO SMALL AS HE LEANED TO KISS ME GOODBYE!



AS HE GOT ON HIS BIKE IT BEGAN TO RAIN.

I TOLD HIM TO GO SLOW BUT I'LL NEVER KNOW IF HE HEARD ME!



IT SEEMED TO TAKE ME HOURS TO GET TO WHERE HE'D BEEN HIT.



HE WAS LYING ON HIS SIDE WITH HIS FACE TURNED AWAY. I KNEELED DOWN ON THE BROKEN GLASS TO SEE IF HE WAS BREATHING.



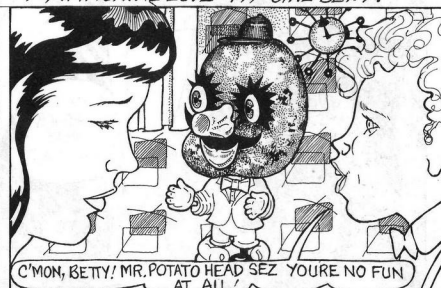
I TURNED HIS FACE TOWARD ME AND KISSED HIM. HIS SOFT WARM LIPS HAD GROWN COLD. CLUTCHED IN HIS HAND WAS A LITTLE PHOTO OF ME TAKEN BY SOME MAN NAMED IRVING. IN WATER-STAINED INK ON THE BACK WAS SCRAWLED "MY IMMORTAL LOVE - MY GIRL BETTY."



WHAT'S GOT HER SO MESSED UP?

DUNNO - BUT IT MUST BE BAD! THAT'S THE THIRD TIME SHE'S LEFT HER MODRESS PADS IN HER HAIR!

THEY ALL STARE AND WHISPER AT SCHOOL.



C'MON, BETTY! MR. POTATO HEAD SEZ YOU'RE NO FUN AT ALL!



MISS PAGE! YOUR SNIVELING IS DISRUPTING THE TEST!

I'VE SUNK FROM TOP OF THE CLASS TO STUDY HALL.



SIGH THEN ASK MOM TO CALL AN AMBULANCE.

HOW CAN I FORGET HIM - MY SWEET SAD LEADER OF THE PACK?

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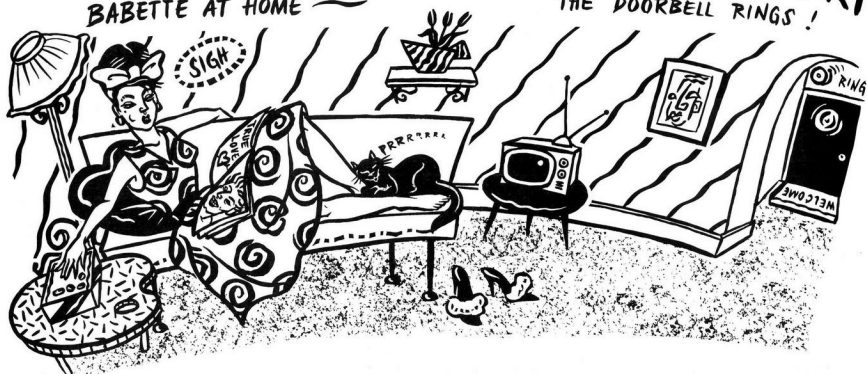
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TODAY I MET THE BOY I'M GONNA MARRY

BY CAROLINE DELLA PORTA

BABETTE AT HOME

THE DOORBELL RINGS!



WHO CAN IT BE??

HIS DARK EYES FLASH WITH HOT PASSION



— SHE SUCCUMBS, POWERLESS ----THEY ARE CONSUMED BY DESIRE



SHE HESITATES — HE REASSURES — SHE IS TRANSFORMED !!!



— HER VOICE QUIVERS WITH EMOTION — HE SAYS THOSE WORDS ---





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THIS, DARLING--
THEN I'M
YOURS!

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B. White

LOVE

HE IS A MAN OF CONVICTION — AND EFFICIENCY !!



THE PAIN OF FAREWELL



SHE HAS GOT WHAT SHE WANTED

SO HAS HE !!!



THE REAL

SOH0, LONDON. The heart of England's film and television industry. On the top floor of a building which looks as though the most exciting thing tenanted within might be the offices of a certified accountant are, in fact, the offices of *The Last Resort*. There is no lift. But there is a sign congratulating you on having successfully negotiated the 79 steps. Were I older, or marginally less fit, I would not be amused. Nevertheless, the staff are well used to greeting the breathless (these steps, by the way, must give rise to no end of "breathless at meeting Jonathan Ross" quips), and politely offer coffee, tea or Perrier.

Jonathan Ross, *enfant terrible* of English TV chat shows, is in a meeting planning that week's show. The door to the meeting room is open, and I can see a wall covered—literally ceiling to floor—with bits, pieces and scraps of paper bearing names of various guests past, present and possible. In another room, a man is doing his darndest to break heavy link chains wrapped around his chest.

I don't look. I sit and wait, and get caught up in that waiting-room game of reading copies of any old magazine that might be lying around. Shadows move, in the corner of my eye, and Jonathan startles me from the world of *Woman's Own*. He's tall. And he looks tall. There are some people who are over six feet but exude five-foot-eightiness.

That's your intro. Deadlines and writer's block keep me from turning this into a "feature" interview. Besides, what kind



of picture could I paint of him? What can I say that hasn't been said in the dailies, weeklies, fortnightlies or monthlies that emblazoned him across their covers to mark the start of the second series of *The Last Resort*?

He is as you see him on the television—sharp, on the ball, a bit of a lad, and talks nineteen to the dozen. But we hadn't met to talk about TV, or *The Last Resort*, or *that suit*, or whatever. We'd met, as people do, to talk about comic books. And when we started talking about comic books, we could have talked all night.

So, without further ado—the man with the plan. . .
Jonathan Ross!

I LIKE COMICS a lot. I've been collecting since I was about 10, I guess. I started straight with Americans. I can't remember the first ones I actually started reading, because my older brother used to buy them, so I used to read his. But he wasn't a collector or anything—he would buy them and throw them away.

I think the first ones I got seriously into when I was really young were the DC mystery ones, probably. Like *The Witching Hour*. I used to love *The Witching Hour*. *The Phantom Stranger* I was crazy about. All those ones which, I guess, because no collectors were really after that much you could pick up in junk shops.

I wasn't collecting insofar as getting a set, but I used to like having them all. 'Cause if you had things like *House of Mystery*, and that sort of thing, it was, like, in the hundreds already, so you didn't really think about collecting them all.

Then there was a junk shop up the road from us that had this magnificent store of old Marvels in at one time. I got FF number 3. Admittedly it didn't have a cover, but it was still really nice to have it. And I got lots of mid-50s, mid-60s—in terms of the



ROSS

number, not the year — *Fantastic Fours*, all quite nice apart from the fact that they had a big 3 written on them — they were 3 pence each.

Then I discovered comic marts, and they were fantastic. I'd go along and buy *shit* as well. I'd buy stuff like DC *Metamorphos*. I don't think I had a lot of quality control then.

I collect now, but I don't have the time to do it as much as I'd like to do it. Like, last time I went to the comics convention, I was really fucked off to know that no one would take credit cards. 'Cause I've actually got the money to indulge myself now, so I was going to buy *Amazing Fantasy* 15 and *Spidey* 1, but the geezer wouldn't take credits cards. I had about 50 quid on me, so... How do these people expect to do business, eh? I mean, who goes to a comic mart with two grand on 'em!

Did you ever want to be a superhero?

I always fancied being Electro, the villain, because he had a brilliant costume. I guess I always wanted to be a Ditko hero. *Spider-Man* I liked the idea of, I never really wanted to be a member of the *Fantastic Four*. I think the *Fantastic Four* didn't appeal to me because they didn't have secret identities. But I love the *Fantastic Four* — it was my first big collection.

You know when you've got one main collection. . .? My friend Joe, he had *Spider-Man*. I think it's a bit like the way some people get football teams — you don't choose your collection, it chooses you. Before I knew about comic marts and other things, I had more *FF* than anything else, so it became my favourite collection, and it's still probably my best collection.

But *Spider-Man* appealed to me mostly, just like any puny kid. The fact that Peter Parker is Mr Puny, it appealed to that obvious fantasy side. But I remember my favourites were always kind of very odd characters. *The Question*, I thought,

• Continued on second page following



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was fantastic. The early *Questions*. I don't like the new *Question* at all. I've got no patience for that, it's not what it should be. But the early ones, the old Ditko ones.

The *Creeper* I liked. *The Hawk* and *The Dove* I thought were great, although I didn't like the writing. I just liked the style, I guess. I liked the *Blue Beetle* when Ditko was doing that. I loved the villains. I guess that pop-art psychedelia. . . .
How did you get so many of the Charltons back then?

It was cheap. You'd go to someone like Alan Austin, one of the early fan dealers—and I was quite discerning. I was a Ditko fan, you see—and you could try and fill the gaps of recent imports you needed, like the Englehart *Avengers*, and they'd cost you a lot of money. I mean *nothing* by today's standards, but a lot of money. Or, for the money of one of them, you could probably get all six issues of the Charlton *Blue Beetle* by Ditko. So anyone with any fucking sense, I would think, would go for the *Blue Beetle*. That's what I'd get, and be very happy as well.

And once again, *The Creeper* weren't expensive. The original *Showcase* that he appeared in may be a little bit more expensive, but not much. You could get a lovely condition copy. It was a great comic. *Captain Atom*. . . . I picked up quite a few of the very early *Captain Atom*s before Ditko was doing *Spidey*.

What are you reading these days?

Well, I suppose it's going to be fairly boring, kind of like Adult Comic Reading. *Watchmen* was great. I like the new Japanese stuff that's coming out at the moment. I especially like *Lone Wolf and Club*. *Mai the Psychic Girl* is fun. I like *Eddie Current*; I thought that was really nice. The artwork was a bit like Giffen, but it wasn't Giffen.

I don't like *Video Jack* much, it's a bit boring. It's like the *Dr Fate*—it looked great, the first two were fine, 3 got a bit weak, 4 was such a wanky ending. It's such a shame. Beautiful to look at. I love his artwork, Giffen. He did some early *Defenders*, didn't he?

Who else do I buy at the moment? Anything by Alan Moore is always readable and exciting. *Swamp Thing*'s good. The new John Constantine shows a lot of promise. I didn't like the art much, but I loved the cover, and I quite liked the storyline.

A lot of these English artists, when they first start to work for the Americans, I think you've got to give them about ten issues to find their own pace. Like Alan Davis is turning in some really nice work now. Whereas initially, he just didn't suit the colour format. So give Ridgway some time and I think he'll be really nice.

What would you like to see happen in comics?

I'd just like to see new stuff coming out. I like to be surprised. I don't want to see more of the stuff we've got already, no matter how much I love it. I don't want to see another *Dark Knight*, 'cause *Dark Knight*'s been done. Even though if there was another one out I'd probably be so happy, I'd love every minute of it. But I don't want to see that, because we've had that. These people should be doing newer, more exciting things.

What they're doing in a way is we're growing up with them. That's why it's such an exciting time for comic buyers. Frank Miller has educated us to accept superheroes as no longer a redundant form. You don't have to put on your nostalgic cap or your 13-year-old cap to enjoy a comic book now—a super hero comic. You can enjoy it realistically. And Alan Moore's done the same thing.

And what they do so brilliantly is happening in all kinds of other areas as well. Not so much cinema, 'cause it's big money, but it's happening in TV a little bit. What's happening is the creators are playing with our knowledge of the form. So Moore can play off our knowledge of superheroes, as he does in *Watchmen*. . . .

But doesn't that get a bit incestuous?

It does. And that's why, in a way, that's reached saturation point. But it was a wonderful ride to be on while it was lasting. Now if another one came along and tried to do another *Watchmen*, or if someone else takes another hero. . . .

Like that crap *Demon* mini-series a while ago. When Kirby was doing *The Demon*, *Demon* was fantastic. I loved all that Kirby/DC New World stuff, and even if *The Demon* didn't fit in

with all that, it was brilliant. Superb. Then some wanker. . . . They advertise it like: "What Miller did to the *Dark Knight* we're going to do the *The Demon*". You don't need to do it to *The Demon*. *The Demon* never belonged in DC comics in the first place. It was a mystery how it ever got there. It was a brilliant mystery. . . . Then what they've done is some idiot, some jerk has dragged it back to make it an acceptable, crappy, trashy 4-colour comic. But it annoys me that they market it as something new and innovative, and it isn't.

I'm not quite sure what to make of the new *Shadow*, the Sienkiewicz job. . . .

I think the art is excellent, the story's crap. The story doesn't make any sense. . . .

Hmmm. It's a shame. The story is vital. The older we get. . . . When I was 12, 13, I could have appreciated just the artwork in a book. Now I can still appreciate the artwork, but I get frustrated if the story doesn't excite me or provoke me. I don't have the time to re-read comics. It has to work for me once, and maybe I'll go back and read it again. Like *Dark Knight* I went back and read again. *Watchmen* I will read again as soon and the hardback comes out.

Do you want to write comics?

I don't think I'd ever want to write comics. I don't think I have the discipline. I used to love the idea of drawing them, but I'd probably only like to draw what I had written and I don't have any discipline as a writer, which is why my stories were always very bad. They'd tail off and they'd fuck up.

My pen name was D'arcy Sarto. What I used to do is I'd give the stuff to my best friend Joe, my comic fan friend. He worked in a photocopy shop and he would do high-quality photocopies and bind them, because otherwise they would have been too expensive to produce. Then we'd take them down to Paul Gravett and he'd sell them at his Fast Fiction stall. At one time I went in with a pile and left them in Virgin—they had a big *FREE* written on them—to see if anyone would pick them up.

My last creation was a guy called Doctor Death. This was about four or five years ago. He had a robot sidekick called Spunky.

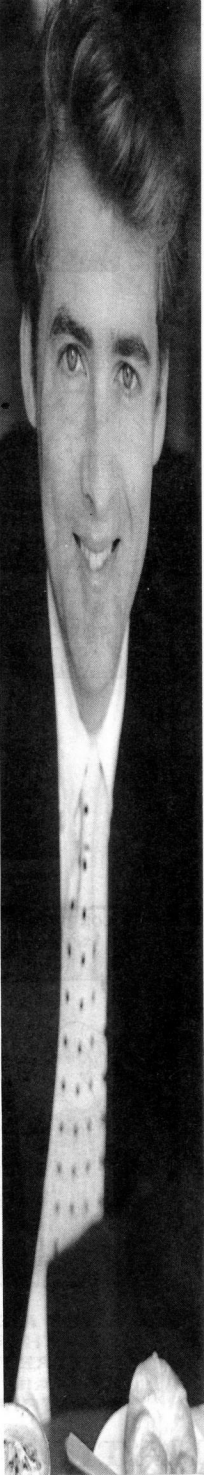
I haven't drawn anything in a while, but I always doodle. I used to really enjoy drawing them. I used to love thinking up things. . . . But I also think it was very frustrating, because I wasn't a particularly talented artist. I don't think I had the dedication to just accomplish what one can in terms of technique, never mind that special flair you get for layout and design in a really talented artist.

I mean, there are a lot of good artists at Marvel and DC that are just good draughtsmen. There's nothing wrong with that. They can tell a story, and it's sometimes entertaining. Fine. But the flair that you look for in early Kaluta, or early Wrightson, when sometimes the physiques are dreadful, and the layout might not be that good, but there's something about the whole that gets it. It's different, but there's also a heart in it. You know, you feel there's a passion in there. Whereas you can look at Wrightson now, and his style isn't noticeably different to when he first started—the hollow cheekbones are still there, and the angular fingers—but it's a parody of himself.

When you find a new talent that is young, or even an old talent that's young—still interested, which is what I mean by young—then it's a very exciting thing. And that's what Miller's got. And that's why Miller's good, because he keeps pushing. And although he stays very firmly within the mainstream—despite his borrowing from Japanese or French or European art, he still stays within the mainstream of Big Bucks Comics—he's a thought-provoking artist, and an exciting artist, and he uses layout tremendously.

I love the art in comics, but I don't like seeing panels blown up. I wouldn't want to own the original artwork, particularly. I used to *think* I would. When I was younger, I thought if I had a lot of money, I would buy the original art. Now, I realise I wouldn't.

Because the beautiful thing about comics is it is mass-produced art. You see it how you should be seeing it. It should have that bright, garish colour sometimes. It's designed to look that way, and that's it.





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Da-doo-ron-ron and the heartbreak hotel



How did I come to be here?
Did I drive or walk?
I was standing on the
pavement when I heard him
talk.....

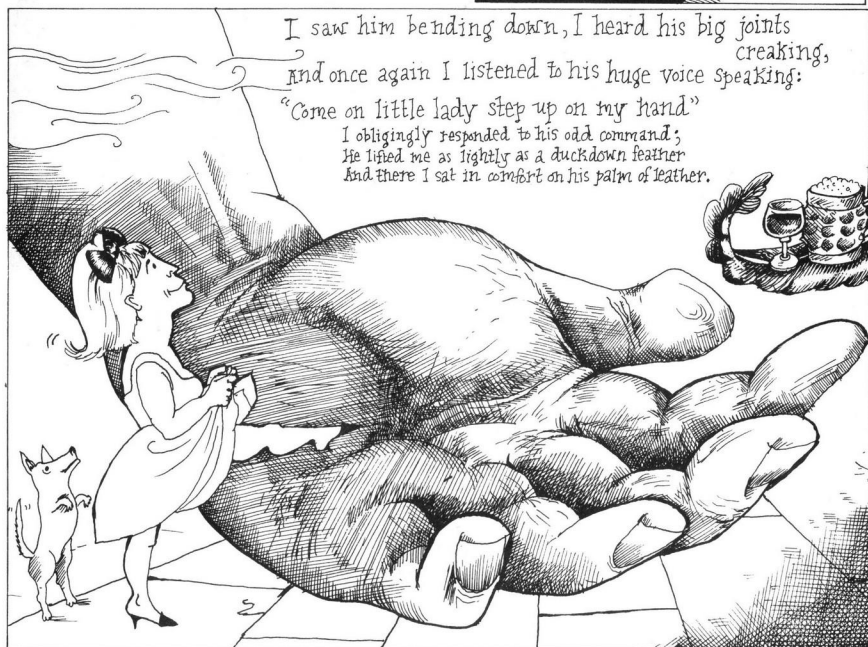
WELCOME TO MY
HOTEL, YOU'RE
AN HONOURED
GUEST. OUR
CATERING AND
SERVICE ARE THE
VERY VERY BEST!

I couldn't see his face -his head
was in the clouds, floating up
there dimly in the misty
shrouds. His voice came booming
down with authority:

HOWDYA LIKE
TO COME FOR A
DRINK WITH
ME?

"Yes indeed
I'd love
to"

He chuckled
I with
glee, and
coolly as an angel
kissed him on his
KNEE!



I saw him bending down, I heard his big joints
creaking,
and once again I listened to his huge voice speaking:

"Come on little lady step up on my hand"

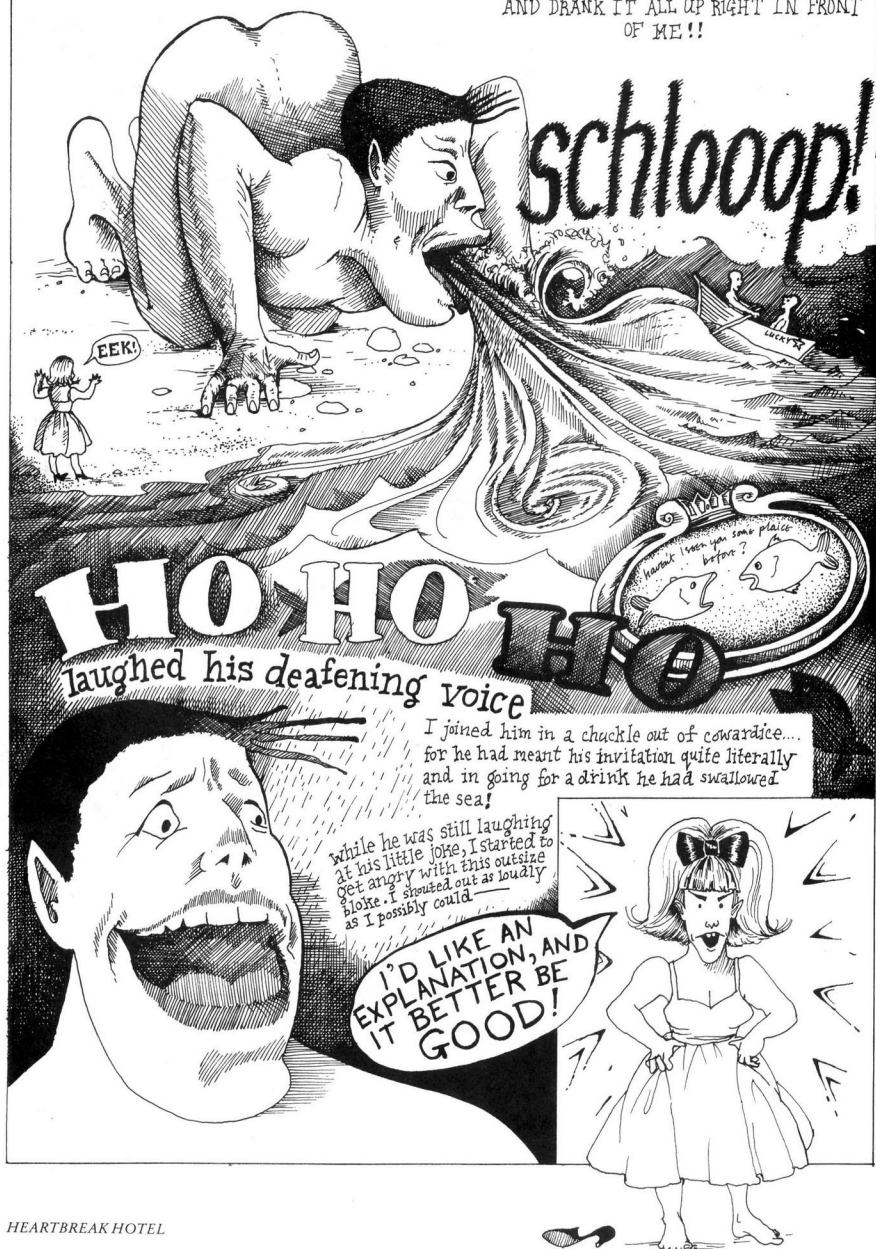
I obligingly responded to his odd command;
He lifted me as lightly as a duckdown feather
And there I sat in comfort on his palm of leather.



Off he went a-walking at a furious pace - I felt the wind a-whistling round my ears and face. "I wonder where we're going?" wondered I aloud, "I wonder if we'll bump into the usual crowd?"

Arriving at the coast, he placed me on the sand; my legs had started quaking, I could hardly stand! He knelt on one knee..... and put his mouth to the sea

AND DRANK IT ALL UP RIGHT IN FRONT OF ME!!







....that momentous meeting
made your heart stand still!

Bill telephoned an ambulance immediately, but already my teen
angels had alerted me to expect another guest in this hotel of mine
for broken hearted lovers, my sweet valentine. And that is how
you found yourself outside the door of the heartbreak hotel"
and with a loud guffaw,

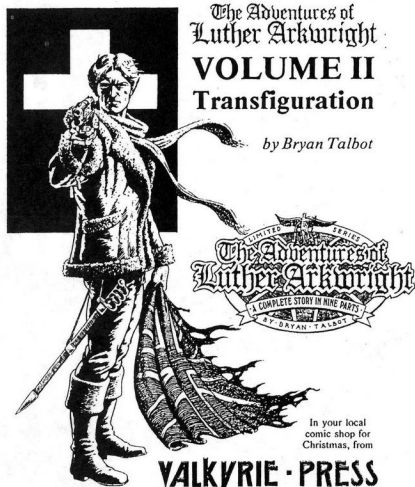
He floated past
my eyes
in a cloud of
glory....

Codas

POOR BILL HAD FELT SO AWFUL, HE
HAD CARRIED ME HOME, AND
TOLD MY DAD AND MOTHER,
THEN LEFT THEM ALONE
TO MOURN THEIR LITTLE DAUGHTER
WHO WAS NOW IN HEAVEN, AND
ARRANGED TO HAVE ME BURIED
TUESDAY NIGHT AT SEVEN.

Which brings us to
the finish of my sad, sad story.

Helen Moshongbook ©1987



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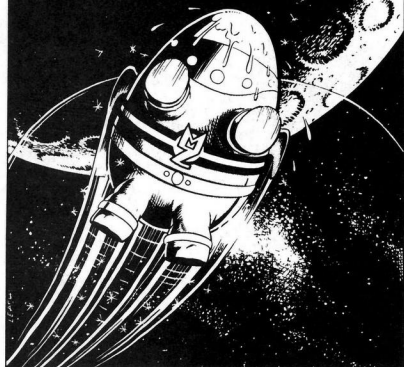
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Pitney is a legend indeed. Gene Pitney has been around a lot longer than those 24 years since he shot to the top of the charts with the Bacharach/David-penned *24 Hours from Tulsa*. As early as 1960, songs Gene had written were notching up the highest positions in the charts—songs like *Rubber Ball*, covered by both Bobby Vee and Marty Wilde in 1960, and Ricky Nelson's 1961 hit, *Hello, Mary Lou*.

It wasn't until 1961 that Gene himself had a Top 40 hit. When his song *I Want to Love my Life Away* was turned down by recording agents, he recorded it himself—at a cost of \$30.00 in a makeshift garage-studio. He laid down seven vocal tracks, piano, drums and guitar. The only thing he didn't play was bass.

As his recording career took off, he continued writing. And ironically, one of his own compositions—recorded by someone else—kept Gene from having a Number 1 in 1962. While Gene was at Number 2 with *Only Love Can Break a Heart*, The Crystals hit Number 1 with the Phil Spector-produced, Gene Pitney-penned *He's a Rebel*. And now, in 1987, *He's a Rebel* has inspired the first part of Linda Parker's *Adventures of Jessamy*, starting on the facing page! Read on...

JESSE SAMMY

PARKER/CALKIN '87



WHEN de STIMIES
COLLIDE...



CASTRATO

MEC

LATER
'SONNY'

HiSSSSS

MRROW

MEANWHILE BACK IN THE SLAMMER
Frankie COUNTS the DAYS...

But he's Not The ONLY ONE

13

FRIDAY
VENGEANCE
A DISH YOU
COLD

tempus FUGIT

CRACK OF DAWN



HERE'S Y'GEAR PUNK...

...WON'T MISS YOUR UGLY MUG...

YEAH!..COS YOU'LL SEE ME AGAIN REAL SOON...

Rough
Justice
awaits



NEED A RIDE JAILBIRD?

PISS OFF!

NO ONE TALKS TO ME LIKE THAT...



OOOH - HE'S A REBEL...

BUT THAT'S NO REASON WHY I CAN'T GIVE 'IM ALL MY LOVE... FREE!



WHAT THE FU..





Continued next issue...

PAUL GAMBACCINI MY LIFE IN COMICS

THE FIRST COMICS I can remember reading were in fact *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories* with Carl Barks' Donald Duck in the 50s. I remember sitting on a couch at home in Westport, Connecticut with my grandmother reading one of these stories to me. I also remember being in the doctor's office excited that they had one — this was when comics were still 52 pages — and loving it. And it's very ironic that I loved them then and that as an adult I went back and actually collected them...

My life in comics has been through a couple of very distinct phases. The first phase started by accident. In 1960, I was over at a friend's house. His name was Jon Haskett, and he had this pile of *Mad* magazines. I should say it was his sister's. And amongst them was the first giant *Superman Annual*, and I borrowed it.

There were some great stories in there, such as the first Bizarro story — the Superboy-Bizarro where Bizarro commits suicide, basically. And I thought, this is good stuff. And I went to the Westfair Smoke Shop and I bought whatever other DC hero comics they had that day. Amongst them, I recall, was *Flash* 114, *Captain Cold*...

And that was it. I just started. I started collecting all the DC heroes at that time — Marvel didn't yet exist — and I also bought *Uncle Scrooge*. Obviously, without knowing it, without even knowing who Carl Barks was, without even knowing it was the same guy who'd done the Donald stories I'd read in *Comics and Stories* when I was a real little kid, I recognised this guy's genius.

It got to the point where every Tuesday and Thursday I'd go to the Smoke Shop, 'cause those were the new comic days, and the woman who ran the shop, God bless her, would put aside one copy of every new title that had come in so that I could pick it if I wanted them.

I didn't buy every new title. I didn't buy *Love or Humour*, but it was very sweet of her to give me the option. This is so long ago that *Classics Illustrated* were still going.

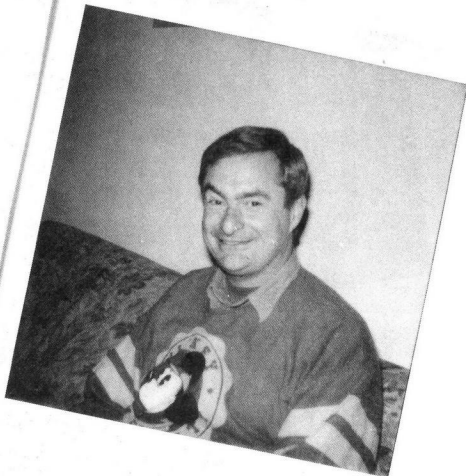
So anyway, 1961. Julius Schwartz starts giving away original art of the pages of *The Flash* in the letter columns. Two people would get original art every month. And I thought, "I want some of this." I sat down — here I was, 12 years old — and I wrote what was one of those letters which was groomed for publication. It was obviously going to be published. And it was, and I won some original artwork.

At the time, Jerry Bales and Roy Thomas had done *Alter-ego* number 1, the first comics fanzine. Although... the Thomsons had done their fanzine X-E-R-O — I never really knew how you pronounced it "Zero" or "Ex-ero" — and they had the *All in Color for a Dime* series in that, which was about comics...

But anyway, *Alter-ego* number 1 was basically the beginning of comics fandom. And they just sent it out to people who had addresses in the letter columns. That's how comics fandom began.

I remember getting it and I was so excited, and my father... My poor father — he always came down on the wrong side of things that I loved. He saw that I'd got this in the mail and he said, "How can you read this trash!" He'd had a similarly negative reaction to rock 'n' roll. When I was 8 years old he said, "How can you listen to this damn music?" This was the first time I'd ever heard my father swear, and it made a deep impression on me. And I realised that my love of the music meant more to me than his disapproval of it. And of course, he repeated the same mistake in 1961 with comics fandom.

Well, I really got into it. I was writing more and more letters to comics because more and more comics started having letter columns. It got to the point where I was one of three guys who had most letters in. There was another guy called Richard West, who was a



student at MIT. Then there was a guy call Paul Seydor from Imperial, Pennsylvania — I wish I knew what had happened to him...

There I was, 12 years old, and I remember going to Calise's, because my family would sometimes buy the Sunday papers at Calise's, and I went in there and I saw this comic, *Amazing Adult Fantasy* number 15, and I thought, "Oh — I wonder if I should buy this?" because I didn't buy Marvel. Well actually, I had bought *Fantastic Four* number 1. And I tried *Amazing Adult Fantasy* number 15 and I liked it, and anyway, the point is I started with all the Marvels as they happened, and I had them all.

Now, we move ahead — 1963, I think it was — and Jerry Bales retires as the first executive secretary of the Academy of Comic Book Fans and Collectors. So, like, in that two year period, fandom had become established in a limited way. As a matter of fact, I was on the executive board from the word go...

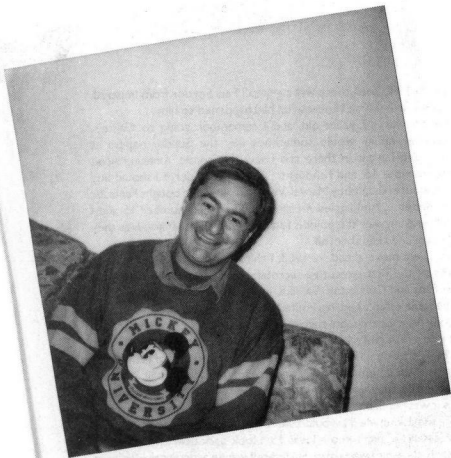
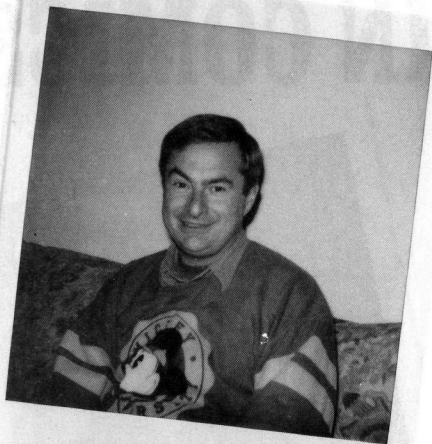
But you were only 12 years old...

No, by that time I was 13. (*Don breaks out in fits of laughter*) But that's just it, you see — we only communicated by mail. Nobody knew, unless they asked, how old you were or what you did. So, I guess it was probably '64, actually, by which case I was 15, when Bales wrote me asking me if I would take over the organisation.

I realised he didn't know I was 15. I look back now and I think he probably thought I was a man. He himself was an assistant professor at a university in Michigan. He taught Greek or Greek culture. And here he handed comic fandom over to this 15-year-old kid.

Well, I was very conscientious for a year. I even started an executive board newsletter, 'cause we had this executive board, and I had it dittoed, and sent out nationally, and I was very organised about it. And I was conscientious, but...

I ran the second Alley Awards. The Alley Awards were a big thing when they were started, but of course, there were no actual awards. People were just declared winners of these awards. I mean, there were supposed to be statues of Alley Oop. Now did anybody ever



make statues of Alley Oop? I didn't have anybody make statues of Alley Oop because, as a 15-year-old kid, I was clueless. How do you make a statue of Alley Oop? So nobody from my year got a statue of Alley Oop.

Alley Oop? He was a caveman comic. The song *Alley Oop* by the Hollywood Argyles was about him. **(Paul and Don now join on a boisterous rendition of Alley Oop. Reader, be glad you did not witness it!)** Big rock 'n' roll number.

There was another thing. We didn't realise what we were starting. We could not see the future. Because we discussed the possibility of a comics lending library, so people could read the old comics they never had. Now think, today, with what horror that suggestion would be greeted. Sending through the mails your valuable old comics. I mean, it doesn't even bear thinking about!

But at that time, comics were so inexpensive. I bought *All-American* number 16, the first Green Lantern, mint — and it was truly mint — from a guy called Raymond Miller, who was one of the great original comics fans, for \$15.00. Nowadays...I mean, check you *Overstreet*, it's over 100 times that.

I collected a nearly complete run of ECs, and the most expensive one cost me \$1.50. So we're talking a different era here. Because the comics were still comparatively recent. We just didn't know...

It was so free at that time, because there were so few of us. I went up to the comic companies and met everybody. I knew Roy Thomas personally, so I went up to Marvel when he was working at Marvel. Now this was, mind you, 1970, this was later. He had just started *Conan*. . . God, it's so difficult to believe that Roy Thomas is now 17 years older than he was then. . . What a horrible idea!

But I went into *Mad*, I talked to Bill Gaines, Al Feldstein, I saw Bill Gaines' bound volumes of all the ECs. I'm certainly under the impression that I met Sergio Aragones when he'd just come to the country and couldn't speak English. Although maybe, now that I look back, I wonder if it was Antonio Prohias, who did *Spy vs Spy*. But I think it was Aragones.

I went to Gold Key and I met Bill Harris. Through another connection, Irwin Donnenfeld — who was one of the owners of DC — took me out on his boat with Carmine Infantino. Infantino told me about this character he was very excited that they had coming out called *Deadman*. . . For me, what a thrill to go sailing with Carmine Infantino...

You could just meet these great people, because we were a novelty to them. I met Julius Schwartz, who is still a god-like figure to me. Still, in those days the fans hardly ever met.

The first convention... I went to the first-ever comics convention, which was held in New York City, off Union Square, and it was run by Bernie Bubnis and Len Wein. Len Wein, who was at the time either 12 or 13.

And he was running a comics convention?

We were almost all kids. And they had a terrible bust-up. Len Wein and I left together, and he was crying, and I sort of tried to console him as I left him in the square... Union Square or Herald Square, I get 'em mixed up... Whatever the one is at 14th Street. Anyway... And that was the last time I saw Len Wein...

Here we get to the classic case of: Whatever happened to all your comics? Here I was, and I had the first four years, say, of all the Marvels, plus the entire DC Silver Age with the exception of the very first few *Flash*...

What killed that phase of comics for me was I became president of the student government in high school and my time went to that. So I had to relinquish my title as executive secretary of the Academy of Comic Book Fans and Collectors. But I'm still listed — or I was still listed in early *Overstreets*, until the mid-80s — as one of the historic moments in comic fandom: my fanzine for the executive board.

And, of course, my greatest honour was having a character in *The Flash* named after me. Julius Schwartz named the villainous tailor who made the costumes for the super-criminals Paul Gambi. And the amazing thing about that was that my grandfather, whom I never met, the Italian immigrant who came to the States, was a tailor...

Paul Gambi appeared a couple of times in the 60s and then he appeared again in the early 80s, near the very end of *The Flash's* run.

How did you feel when they killed Barry Allen?

Well... In a way, I knew he had to go. I mean, the book had just lost its purpose... It's one of the few comic book deaths that had a purpose and integrity. And also, I thought George Perez's drawing of the death of the Flash was fantastic. As he was rotting... I thought it was brilliant. I thought it was well done. But you see, I only picked up on *The Flash* again a couple of late issues and then that last one.

Anyway, I went off to college in '66. Now I saved some comics that I liked the most, but I sold most of them... Why? Because the

●Continued on page 46



WELL, THIS IS THE PLACE, WHERE WE FIRST SET EYES ON EACH OTHER...



I WONDER IF SHE'S HERE, I REMEMBER, IT WAS THIS TIME LAST YEAR...



"BOY, IT FELT LIKE I WAS SOCKED IN THE FACE..."

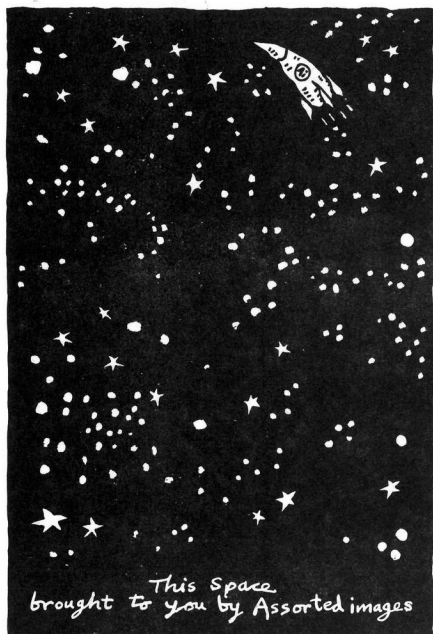
"THAT JOKE WAS SICK! - I LOVED IT!"











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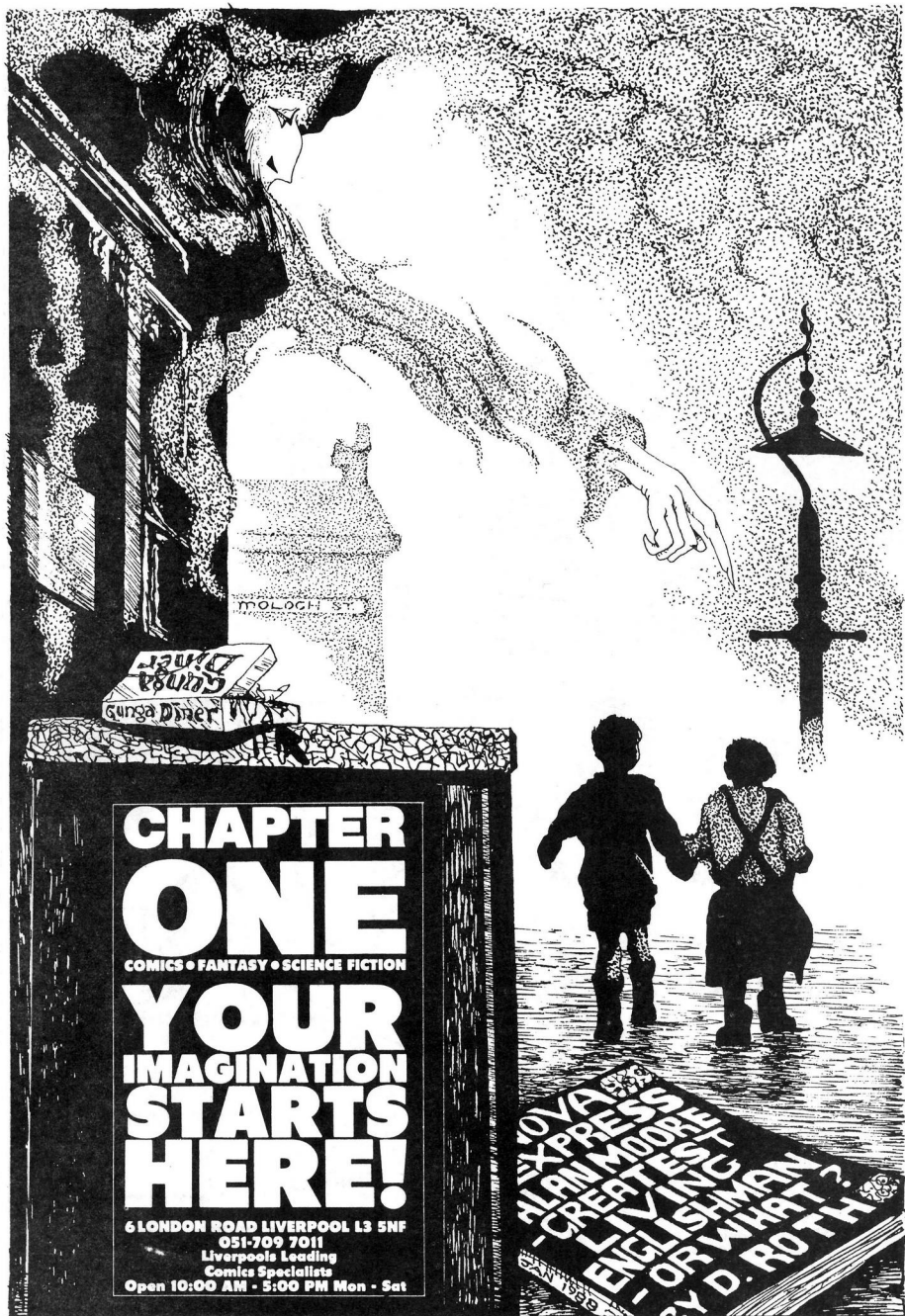
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Open Mon-Sat 9.30-6.00



DEAR DON AND LIONEL...

JUST BACK FROM NEW YORK, STILL CULTURE-LAGGED...

WE ARRIVED IN N.Y ON HALLOWE'EN. THE FIRST PEOPLE WE SAW ON THE STREET WERE DOROTHY, THE SCARECROW, THE TIN MAN AND THE COWARDLY LION...

ON THE FLIGHT HOME, I GET A MASSIVE STATIC SHOCK EVERY TIME I TOUCH THE STEWARD. CAN THIS, AT LAST, BE LOVE?

ON THURSDAY, WE TOOK THE AIRTRAK TO WASHINGTON.

YUR PLATFORM'LL BE ANNOUNCED SEVENTY-FIVE SECONDS BEFORE THE TRAIN LEAVES. LISTEN CAREFUL, NOW.

POLITICAL FASHION HINT: IT IS OKAY TO WEAR SOVIET T-SHIRTS IN NEW YORK, BECAUSE NOBODY THERE KNOWS WHAT "C.C.P." MEANS.

CALICO COUNTRY COTTON PICKERS?

HOWEVER, THIS DOES NOT HOLD TRUE WHEN IN WASHINGTON...

K-LIKI

DON AND LIONEL SAY THEY'RE ON THE WINDSH LEDGE, BUT IF YOU GET THIS PAGE IN BY THURS- DAY, THEY WANT JUMP.

SINCE I COULDN'T FIND A 300LB SAMOAN, DEBBIE ACCOMPANIES ME AS MY ATTORNEY. SHE HAS LEARNED A FEW WORDS OF CONVERSATIONAL AMERICAN...

AAAAAY! CREGG! AWOONT!!

* TRANS: 'GOOD GRACIOUS ME! WHAT A FRIGHTFULLY ATTRACTIVE YOUNG LADY.'

IN PENNSYLVANIA STATION, SOMEONE RECOGNIZES ME...

A-ARE YOU ALAN MOORE?

...MIND YOU, TWO DAYS LATER, SOME- ONE ELSE SAID "ARE YOU ONE OF THE ALLMAN BROTHERS?"

WE WERE IN WASHINGTON TO VISIT THE CHRISTIC INSTITUTE, AND TO ATTEND THE EXCELLENT STAGE PRODUCTION OF "AMERICAN SPLENDOR" WITH JOYCE BRABNER AND HARVEY Pekar.

YOUR STUFF'S GREAT, BUT I JUST CAN'T SEE MESELF EVER DOING AUTOBIOGRAPHY LIKE THAT.

OH-HUH-SURE.

ARRIVING HOME ON SUNDAY, WE GAVE PHYLIS THIS REALLY NICE BLUE SHIRT AND SOME GOLD PLASTIC SUNGLASSES.

THE KIDS GOT "BILL THE CAT" T-SHIRTS AND MONSTER FEET.

ALL YOU GET IS THIS, I'M AFRAID.

SECRETLY WANTED ONLY POKER-ING MOBILE.

TAKE CARE, AND I'LL TALK TO YOU SOON. BEST,

Alan Moore

© 10-11-87

SECRETLY SHIRTS CROQUINES.

SECRETLY WANTS DONALD LEE CHANNEL TELEVISION.

TAKE CARE, AND I'LL TALK TO YOU SOON. BEST,

Alan Moore

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SECRETLY WANTED ONLY POKER-ING MOBILE.

TAKE CARE, AND I'LL TALK TO YOU SOON. BEST,

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Alan Moore

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SECRETLY SHIRTS CROQUINES.

SECRETLY WANTS DONALD LEE CHANNEL TELEVISION.

POSTER IN NYC, I FOUND MESSIE CONNECTING FOR MTV. TIME WITH DAVID J. AND LOVE PROCKETS. IS THIS THE STORY OF THE MESSIE EXPRESSION? -BEST

Witty Solther



Redfox # 11 & 12, by Chris Bell and Fox (Valkyrie Press).
The Solthenis # 1, by Richard Piers Rayner and Vincent A. Danks (The Rogues' Gallery).
The Adventures of Luther Arkwright # 1 & 2, by Bryan Talbot (Valkyrie Press).

Redfox, despite its Eagle award, turns out to be precisely the half-assed mishmash of *Red Sonja* and *Elfquest* which I'd always imagined it to be.

Its much-vaunted humour consists of lines like: "Magic sword, eh? Never touch 'em myself..." And, despite the book's reliance on funny animals, the artist seems quite incapable of investing the characters with any degree of charm.

The Solthenis will be of interest to retarded superhero junkies who like anything muscular in a tight-fitting costume, but I'd advise those with a functioning brain to avoid it. The brutal truth, I fear, is that none of the people contributing to either of these two books is

anywhere near ready for their work to see print. I trust you will all join me in ignoring them and hoping they go away.

Bryan Talbot, on the other hand, is quite clearly a talented man. His penmanship alone would make Arkwright a worthwhile visual package, but he also throws in some very nice work with photo panels and fake-newspaper effects. A functioning brain, no less.

Nor is he any slouch with a typewriter. Take his opening words for the dense, reality-hopping tale: "A 1984... a Hyde Park... an Albert Memorial". That recalls nothing so much as Orwell's brilliantly simple opening shot concerning all the clocks striking thirteen, and has the same unsettling effect.

I suspect also that Arkwright provided Alan Moore — who admits to being a cultural kleptomaniac — with one of the templates for Constantine. I shall be buying all nine issues of this latest edition, and I suggest you do likewise.

Swedes — don't ya luv 'em?
 The comedians of the north.
 Witty. Garrulous. Warm ...
 loving ... cultured ...
 imaginative ... on the ball.

I could go on, but my
 Thesaurus simply isn't up to
 describing that epitome of Aryan
 perfection — as he likes to think
 of himself — the Swede.

If you've seen *Chess*, you've no
 doubt bumped into a few of them
 in the lobby, swilling back cheap
 alcohol while they can.

At a fiver for a glass of wine
 in Sweden, or three quid for a
 beer, who can blame them? Not
 that expensive booze stops them
 hitting the bottle in a big way.
 You can smell the queues at the
 state off-licenses from at least a
 mile away.

A sharp wit, the Swede. If
 you've read Strindberg, you'll
 know what I mean. A Swede's
 idea of humour in the twentieth
 century is to try to imitate Monty
 Python. The Swede, of course,
 doesn't realise that Monty Python
 is pretty old stuff. But then, if
 you live in the backwater of
 Europe, you get a bit out of
 touch. Problem is, the Swede
 thinks everyone is laughing at the
 Monty Python joke. They're not.



They're laughing at the Swede
 making a complete ass of himself.

Garrulous? Well, maybe I
 exaggerate. Heard the story about
 the Scandinavians who got stuck
 on a desert island? The two
 Danes got on fine, the
 Norwegians squabbled all the

time, but the Swedes sat on
 opposite sides of the island and
 said nothing to each other
 because they hadn't been
 introduced.

Some say the Swedes are just
 shy because they're afraid of
 making fools of themselves —
 though they succeed in making
 fools of themselves anyway. So
 they come across as cold. Glacial,
 even.

Forget the Swedish sex myth. A
 Swede's idea of a good night's
 entertainment is to be plonked
 (not bonked) in front of the TV
 with half a dozen beers. The
 domesticated Swedish man spends
 his daytime wiping the kid's
 backside, peeling potatoes and
 doing the laundry.

No wonder the population is
 declining in Sweden — they'll
 face extinction soon. And no
 wonder the Ullas and Evras rush
 off to the Mediterranean each
 summer to uncross their legs and
 screw as many hirsute Greeks as
 possible — that must be where
 the myth of the Swede as slut
 comes in ... It's chiefly because
 they can't wait to get away from
 those boring Bjorns and Bertils.

Who wants to make love to an
 ice cube? No thanks.

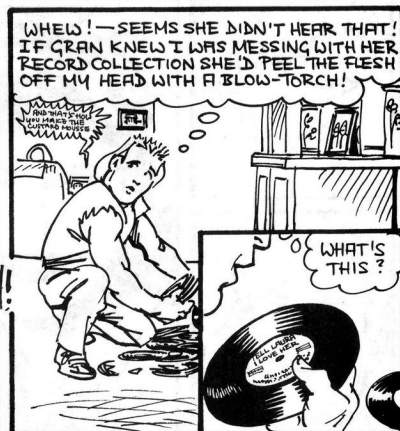
DENZEN IN PARK

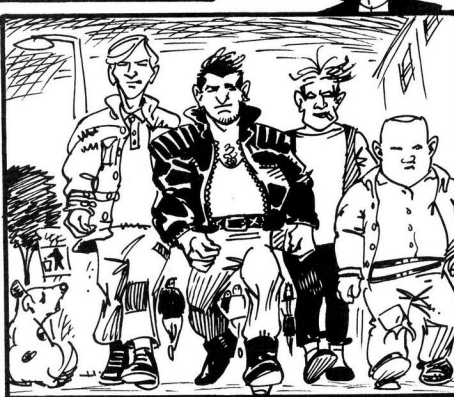
UNEMPLOYED CRIMEFIGHTER

TALENTED

John Zras







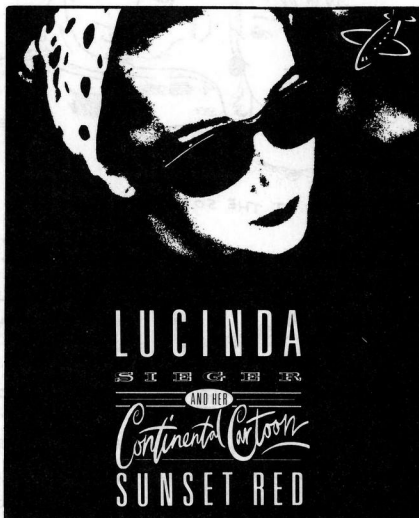


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HEARTBREAK OTEL

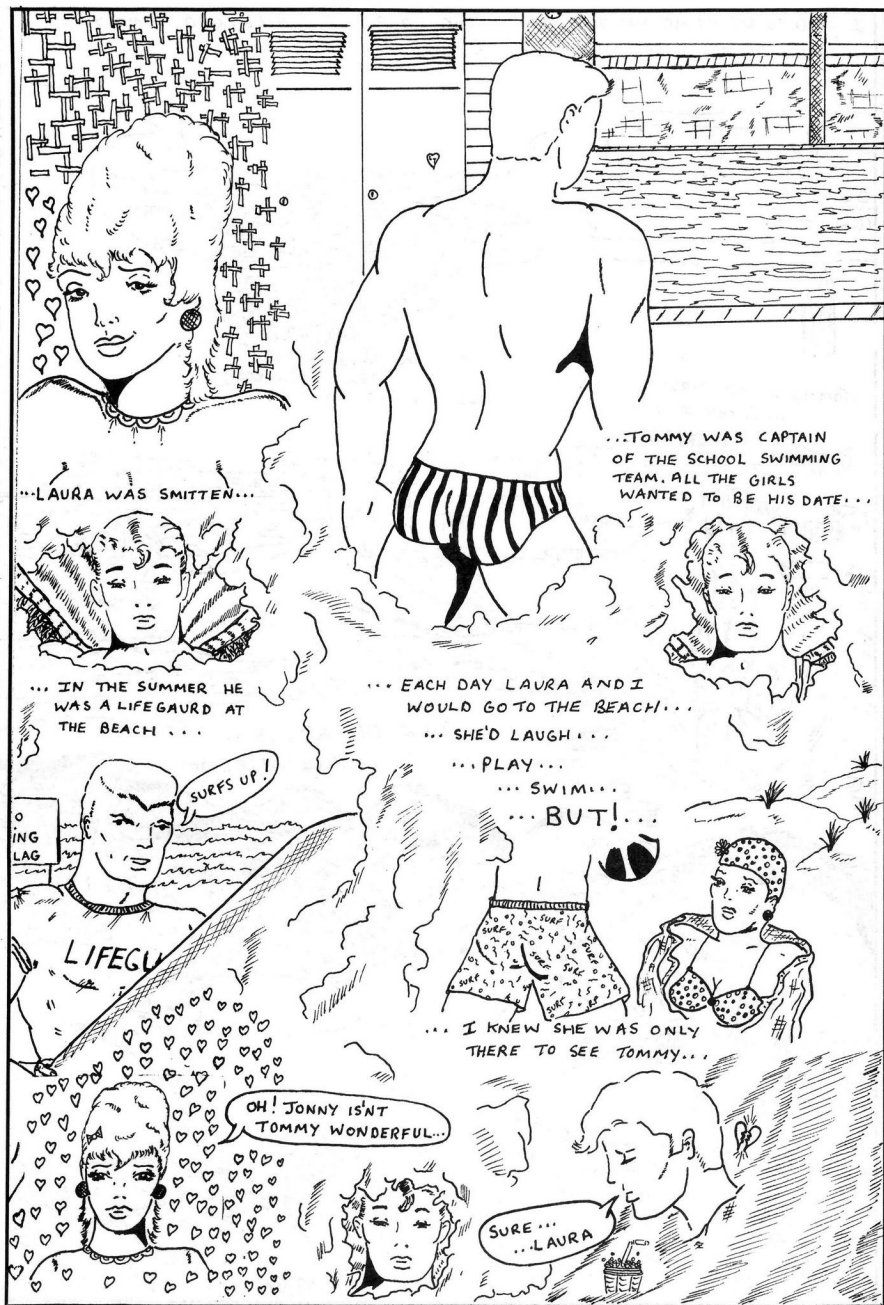
TEEN ANGELS
IN
ANGUISH

WE MET AT THE SODA SHOP ...

... OUR LOVE GREW
OVER A DOUBLE TOFFEE MALT...

THEN CAME... TOMMY!

HOW COULD I COMPETE WITH HIM?!!!



...LAURA WAS SMITTEN...

...TOMMY WAS CAPTAIN
OF THE SCHOOL SWIMMING
TEAM. ALL THE GIRLS
WANTED TO BE HIS DATE...

... IN THE SUMMER HE
WAS A LIFEGUARD AT
THE BEACH ...

... EACH DAY LAURA AND I
WOULD GO TO THE BEACH...
... SHE'D LAUGH ...

...PLAY...
... SWIM...
... BUT!...

... I KNEW SHE WAS ONLY
THERE TO SEE TOMMY...

OH! JONNY ISN'T
TOMMY WONDERFUL...

SURE...
...LAURA

I HAD TO DO SOMETHING. I WAS LOSING LAURA. I CHALLENGED TOMMY TO A HIGH DIVE GAME OF CHICKEN!...

ANGER



ROCKS AT
HIGH TIDE

...TOMMY DIVED FIRST...
... A PERFECT DIVE...

... THEN IT WAS MY TURN...

... I SAW THE ROCKS...
... A WAVE LIFTED ME...

THEN...



PAUL GAMBACCINI

●From page 28

experience was complete. I had done it. I'd run the bloody thing! I mean, OK, it was on a small scale then, and I was only a kid, but I'd done it. I'd seen all these titles start. What was the point of collecting all these titles which were now on issue 35 when you'd had all the number 1s?

I'd been present at the creation of that age of comics, and I had loved every minute of it. I had been thrilled. I had collected. I had done the fan bit, and I didn't want to do anything which was a comedown from that. I didn't want to be less of a fan.

Also, the comics were losing their grip on me, because in the late 60s it was really my feeling that comics were starting to go downhill again. The worst of it was the early 70s. The new-look Batman had come in, which was OK — which was good, Infantino did it for a while. But the reason that was important was because it killed off the whole Jack Schiff era of Bat-Mite and Bat-Girl and Bat-Everything...

The worst thing was that my father, poor guy... I mean, my poor dad... He even ran over and killed our dog.

(Gentle reader, at this point we quite simply lost control. What should, in any good melodrama, have been a cue to open tear-ducts was, in reality, greeted with great outbursts of laughter all around. This is what they mean when they tell you, "Years from now, you'll look back on this and laugh." You will.)

I mean, talk about three strikes, you're out. That was terrible. With us in the car. We were going to go off on a family drive and the

dog was just sitting under the wheels and my father said, "Well, I'll just start the car and scare him and he'll move." And he didn't move.

And the three boys, we were just so terrified and appalled by this dog's frightened squealing... And while they took him to the vet, we went into the house and I led the prayers as the three of us kneeled and recited Hail Marys, crying, bawling our eyes out. And the dog was put down... He was Daniel the cocker spaniel; we called him Danny.

Well anyway, my dear dad, he threw away — or else has secreted in some place which has yet to be discovered — my number 1 box, which was a box with all my number 1s in it.

There had also been a period when I went to Dartmouth when I bought the Marvels without even reading them. I had all the Spider-Mans — and this was like in the 30s and 40s of Spider-Man — and these were pristine mint, I'd never opened them. And we had a box of these, and they're gone now. You know, one of his binges, whouff!

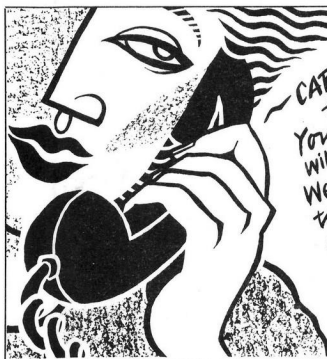
He always had the feeling that in his homes it was his right to move things around or to clean out as he saw fit. I'm afraid that's what happened to many of my early books.

When I came back to England in '75, I sold a few more off, including Silver Surfer number 1. That's the one I miss the most...

You can afford to buy it now.

Yes, but you see, I don't buy anything that I once had. Which leads into the next phase of my comic life...

●Next issue, Paul Gambaccini talks about Dallas, Dynasty, Crossroads, Usagi Yojimbo, skinheads, and explains why a Carl Barks fan and his money are soon parted. Stay tuned to Radio Heartbreak Hotel!



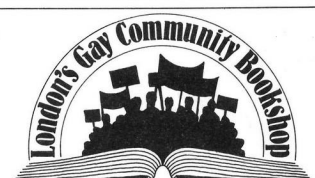
CAROLINE DELLA PORTA?
the ILLUSTRATOR???

You know... the one
with the... REALLY?!

Well - if you want
to speak to her, she's
on 07 729 5841.

Yep - I've seen her
work too -- the
observer, just 17, Miss
London, City Limits
Strip Aids, Financial Times...

Be seen! Be heard! Be **ESSENTIAL!**
An **ESSENTIAL** ad can cost as
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Gay's The Word

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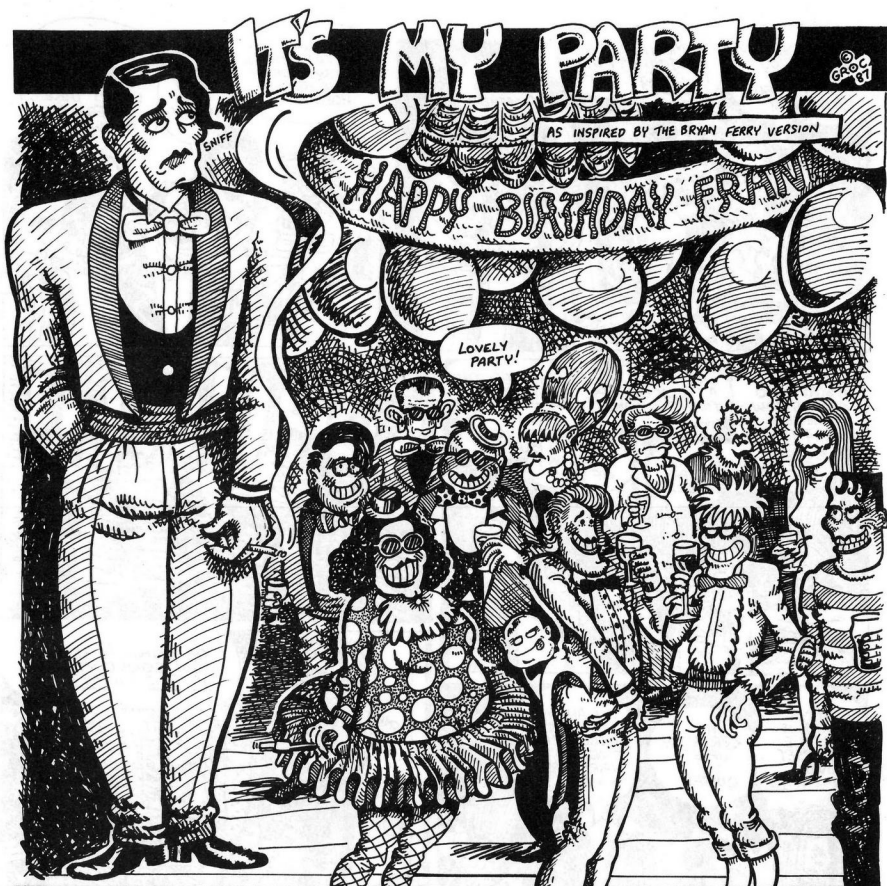
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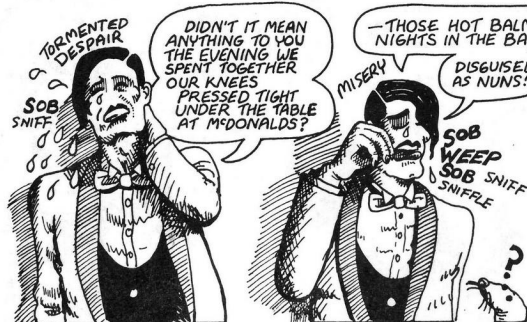
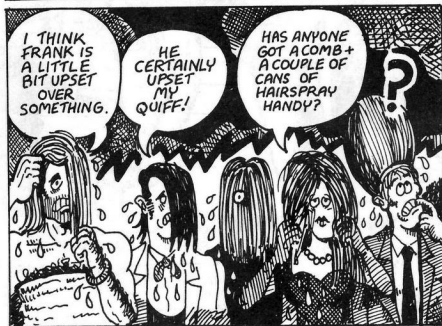
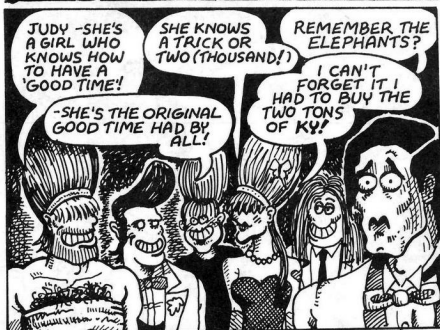
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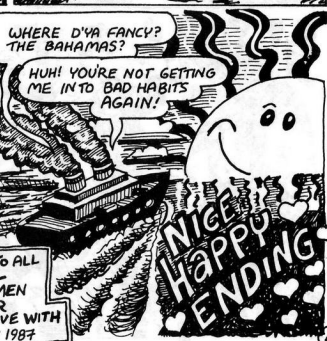
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NEXT ISSUE YOUR GOOD GIRL'S GONNA GO BAD

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**INTERVIEWS — DIVINE AND HANK WANGFORD
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AND LOTS MORE BESIDES!**

Y'ALL COME BACK NOW, HEAR!

TRINA ROBBINS HITS THE MARK

THE MAJOR SUBJECT of conversation, rhetoric, debate and righteous indignation this year in the United States has been **censorship**. It has caused such passionate reaction that when DC comics announced the introduction of a ratings system to their line, they were called censors. People who suggested that perhaps DC had a **right** to rate their own comics if they so chose were called censors.

When I wrote a letter to the Comics Buyers Guide stating emphatically that I **did not** believe in censorship, but noting that there were some very real problems with comics objectifying women in degrading and demeaning ways, and graphically — and often with obvious **pleasure** — depicting rape and violence towards women, I was called a censor and compared to **Josef Stalin** and Joseph McCarthy.

When I tried to discuss the letter with a friend of mine, a woman cartoonist like myself, she said, "Trina, I don't want to talk about that, because I'm against censorship."

I think we're seeing some hastily-reached conclusions here. The misconception is that there are only **two** sides, and that you've got to be on one or the other side. I am against representations in comics of Rambo-style fascism as positive and heroic; of graphic **ultra-violence**; especially against women; and of depictions of rape and degradation of women as a fun thing. I also stand firmly against censorship. I am well aware that I am as **likely** as the next person to fall victim to censorship.

Margaret Atwood's book *The Handmaid's Tale* is about a society taken over by the fundamentalist right wing — a **puritanical**, repressive government ruled by censors. Throughout the book, she gives the reader **glimpses** of what the country was like before the right wing coup.

What she shows us is a world where, true, women had more freedom, but mostly a world where men had the freedom to objectify women. Where industries made money from objectifying women with porn magazines and such bizarre concepts as



motorized **whorehouses** known as Feels on Wheels. In short, a culture very like our own.

Towards the end of the book it is revealed that in this sexually repressive society the men in power have a kind of secret Playboy-type club, complete with female political prisoners in ill-fitting **bunny** costumes. One of these men takes the female protagonist there. He thinks she'll enjoy it. He says, "It's like walking into the past."

But whose past? It's not her idea of fun. What kind of fun is it for a woman to run around in a bunny suit, or work in Feels on Wheels? It is, of course, his idea of the good old days, with all women as sex objects, there only for the **amusement** and entertainment of men.

In either society — the sexually permissive (but really only permissive for men) or the repressive — the woman loses, the men win.

The irony is that in the present battle between those who advocate censorship and those who cry "Freedom!" for comics and other media that glory in the depiction of excessive violence and degradation of women, there *are* only two sides. But they are two sides of the **same coin**, and I'm not trading in that coin.

ANXIOUS? LONELY? DEPRESSED?

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*Heartbreak
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in the next issue of Heartbreak Hotel.



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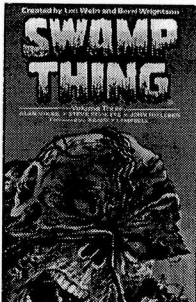
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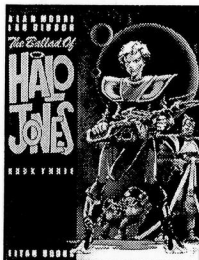
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